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# PERSUASIVE

TO



Holiness of Life;  
IN A

# SERMON

UPON

2 CORINTH. viij. 1.

Having therefore these Promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse our selves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting Holiness in the Fear of God.

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2 C O R. vij. 1.

*Having therefore these Promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse our selves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting Holiness in the Fear of God.*

**T**hese Words are a concise Epitome of the Law and Gospel, and both propounds the Objects of our Faith and Obedience, and shew the Sub-servency of one unto the other. The Gospel chiefly consists in God's gracious Promises, to be receiv'd by Faith: The chief Scope of the Law is to shew us our Duty, and lead us to Obedience. Faith is the Root, Obedience is the Fruit. And we proceed methodically, when the Belief of God's Goodness towards us, tendred in his Promises, stirs up in us a Care to render the Fruits of Righteousness and Holiness required in his Precepts. And to induce to this, is the evident design of this excellent Scripture.

Having these Promises, that is, those instanced in, express'd and specified in the preceding Chapter, which are taken out of *Leviticus, Isaiah, Jeremiah* and *Ezekiel*; tho' the Apostle keep not himself exactly to the Letter, but Sence, Scope and Meaning of them, seeing God hath offered to receive us into the Number of his Children; to own us as his Temple, in which he will dwell, and take us as a peculiar People to Himself. Let us walk worthy and suitable to so high an Honour and Favour, and be holy and perfect, as our heavenly Father is.

In the Words we have these Two Parts:

- I. An Exhortation to Holiness.
- II. Means or Motives, as they may be diversly interpreted, to inable and constrain us to obey the Exhortation.

In the Exhortation we have the Parts and Degrees of what we are exhorted to.

*First*, The Parts which are, 1. *Privative*, Removal of Sin. 2. *Positive*, Attainment of Holiness.

*Secondly*, The Degrees to be considered.

1<sup>st</sup>. In their *Extension*, To all kinds of Sin to be removed, of Flesh and Spirit, and all of either kind ; *All filthiness both of flesh and spirit.*

2<sup>d</sup>. In their *Intension*, To the highest Measure, Perfecting, finishing *Holiness*.

In treating on these Words, I will endeavour,

*First*, To explain the Exhortation according to the Division given.

*Secondly*, I will enquire into, and improve the Force and Cogency of the Apostle's Arguments and Reasons by which he urges us to so exact a Care of Universal perfect Holiness.

### I. First, to begin with a brief Explication.

i. The *Privative* part ; the Removal of Evil : *Let us cleanse our selves from filthiness of flesh and spirit.*

By *Filthiness* is meant Sin ; which defiles us Morally and Spiritually, as the most unclean things pollute us, when they light and stick upon us, naturally and corporally.

By the cleansing our selves from this *filthiness*, is meant here, the *putting off*, or *putting away*, ceasing from the love, practise and allowance of Sin ; and is equivalent to that of *Isaiab*, *Wash you, make you clean ; put the Evil of your doings from before mine eyes : Cease to do evil*, Isa. 1. 16, 17. And that to the *Ephesians*, ch. 4. v. 22. *Put off, concerning your former Conversation, the Old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts.* I know the Phrase of *cleansing*, and *washing*, and *purgung*, is used for the taking away the guilt of Sin by Pardon and Justification : but then 'tis solely the Work of God which we pray him to do for us ; as *Psal. 51. 2. Wash me throughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin*, v. 7. *Purge me with Hy-sop, and I shall be clean ; wash me, and I shall be whiter than Snow.* — Or he promiseth to do for us, as *Ezek. 36. 25. Then I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean ; from all your filthiness will I cleanse you.* But when 'tis required of us to do it, signifies either Repentance for Sins past, the signs of which are Tears, Water being the cleansing Element ; and keeping our selves with all holy Care and Watchfulness, from being defiled with Sin

for the time to come. And tho' it be the Work of God to sanctify, as well as justify ; to impart the Waters of his Spirit, as well as apply the Blood of his Son. Yet may we well be required to do this, because Man hath power to abstain from particular Sins, and is capable of using cleansing Means, which God affords him ; and receiving grace from God, receives withal a power to improve it, and grow in it ; that being cleansed, he may gradually cleanse himself more and more.

In the *Positive* part. By *Holiness*, is meant our Conformity to the Will of God, in State, in Actions, to be such as God requires us to be, and to do the good God expects from us ; to be holy in all manner of Conversation, and propounding to our selves the right End of God's glory ; to promote it by a right Rule his revealed Will, from a right Principle of sincere Love to him.

2. For the *Degrees*. 1<sup>st</sup>. In the *Extension*, Sins of all kinds. Of the Flesh, that is, of the Outward Man or Body ; Sin in outward Actions : That we yield not our members Servants to Iniquity or Untrighteousness : That we suffer not Sin to reign in our mortal Bodies, but keep our Tongues from Evil-speaking, Swearing, Lying, Slandering, obscene, wanton, and corrupt Communication, ungodly and profane Talk ; our Hands from Picking and Stealing, Violence and Murder ; our Mouths from Riot, Gluttony, and Drunkenness ; our whole Body from Fornication, Whoredom and Adultery, and all Pollutions ; in a word, from all Sins which are committed by the Outward Man. Of the Spirit ; that is, Sins of the Soul, and inward Affections ; from Heart-sins, inward Wickedness, all blasphemous and hard Thoughts of God ; Unbelief, Heresy, Pride, Malice, Envy, Evil surmise, impure Thoughts, Uncharitableness, Covetousness, Hypocrisy ; and from all particulars of either kind, not only putting from us some Sins we can well spare, as not being much serviceable to our advantage, nor serving the turn of our pleasure, profit, ambition ; but every one, tho' it be as a *Dalilah*, as a right Hand for profit, or a right Eye for pleasure to us.

2<sup>d</sup>y. Intensiveness, Perfecting Holiness ; striving earnestly

nestly to grow and increase in our Obedience, till we be compleat in all the Will of God ; going from strength to strength, till we appear perfect before God in Zion ; bringing forth more fruit, till we be filled with all the Fruits of Righteousness ; not content to be Babes in Christ, but labouring to attain to a manly Stature, following hard after God ; pressing forward, till we come, as near as may be, to the doing of God's Will on Earth, as 'tis done in Heaven by the Holy Angels, and the Spirits of Just Men made perfect : Still going forward, forgetting what's behind, and striving to be Holy, as he who called us is Holy ; till the Measure be so full, that it will hold no more.

Thus much shall suffice for the Duty of the Text. The Sum of all which is, We must *cleanse our selves from all sin*, which is a defiling filthy thing, both heartily repenting what is past, and washing our selves in Tears of godly Sorrow, from the filth we have already contracted ; and reform and amend for the time to come, that we contract no more ; either by acting Sin with our Bodies, or its Senses or Members ; or harbouring Sin in our Souls, in any of its Faculties or Affections : And we must pursue and follow after Goodness, labouring to attain to the highest measure of it, and, as much as is possible, to be perfectly Holy.

II. I come now, *Secondly*, to enquire into, and improve the Force and Cogency of the Apostle's Arguments and Reasons, by which he urges us to so exact a Care of Universal perfect Holiness.

Now the Apostle draws his Arguments, by which he presseth Christians to this Duty, from a threefold Head or Spring.

*First*, God's Love to us.

*Secondly*, Our Fear of God.

*Thirdly*, Their joint Consideration of both these.

1. From God's Love to us.

1. From a principle of Thankfulness for what we have already received.

2. From a principle of Hope, and desire of what we may receive more.

Take the Reasons plainly and clearly thus :

*First,* Christians should be exactly and universally Holy, because God hath prevented them with his Goodness, and done great Things for them : which require much Thankfulness, and returns of Love. And this is the best way to express and manifest it. Holiness is our real and most acceptable expression of our gratitude and love to God.

*Secondly,* Christians should be thus Holy, because God hath planted in them Desires, and given them Hopes of greater Things yet to be obtained. And this Care and Endeavour of Holiness is the Condition upon which, and the Means by which they are to be obtained.

*3dly.* From our Fear of God flow Two Reasons :

1. Christians should be thus Holy, for fear of grieving and offending God, and forfeiting the Mercies promis'd, or enjoy'd ; the neglect of this being that which forfeits them.

2. Christians should be thus Holy, for fear of incurring the Evils threatned ; the want of this, being that against which the Threatnings are denounced.

*3dly.* From the joint Consideration of Promises and Threatnings, Love and Fear, flows this Reason.

Christians should be thus Holy, because God urges them to it, with all the Arguments Man's Nature is capable of, and shuts them up in utter inexcusableness in their neglect, which is the most likely way to constrain them to their Duty.

Thus have I given you a brief Prospect of all the Reasons coucht in the Text together.

I shall now pursue them severally, and illustrate and improve them one by one.

I begin with the First, which flows from God's Love towards us ; implied and intimated in the Promises we have from him.

The whole Covenant of Grace is nothing else but the Complexure of all his great and precious Promises : And what greater Love can the great God shew, than to condescend to make a Covenant with his Creatures, to come into Bond to Man !

Now

Now there is a twofold Love in God : A Love of Benevolence, by which he prevents us with his Goodness ; willeth us good, and doth us good, to engage us and allure us to be good. And a Love of Complacency ; a remunerating Love, by which he delights in us, and rewards us when we are good.

The first of these calls for our Returns of Love and Gratitude. The second awakes our Hopes, our Desires and Endeavours.

But take the Reasons as they were propounded.

1. Christians should be exactly Holy to manifest their Love and Thankfulness to God, for the great Love he hath manifested to them in his Promises, and in what he hath done for them already.

Now if any should be so insensible of God's kindness ; or so profanely careless of it, as to ask their questions, Mal. 1. 2. *Wherein bast thou loved us ?* Hearken a little till you hear what I have to say on God's behalf. He hath loved thee out of thy first nothing, and given thee thy self, thy Life, thy Breath, and all things, Act. 17. 25. *For in him we live and move, and have our being,* for we are his Off-spring, v. 28. He hath given thee a rational immortal Soul, more worth than all the World ; And hath stamp'd thee with the Beauty of his own bright Image, and made thee but little lower than the Angels, *Crowning thee with glory and honour,* Ps. 8. and made thee Lord of all thy fellow Creatures. He hath loved thee in giving thee Food and Raiment, Deut. 10. 18. and convenient habitation. He hath prevented thee with many Blessings of his Goodness, Psal. 21. 3. He hath not left himself without witness ; giving thee fruitful Seasons, and Rain from Heaven, oft filling thy heart with Food and Gladness, Act. 14. 17. And if to give thy own self to thee, with these additions, seem a small matter to ungrateful Sinners ; What is it to give himself to thee ? And this he hath done : He hath given his Son, that is, Himself for thee. 1 John 4. 10. *Herein is love* (with a witness) *not that we loved him, but he loved us, and sent his Son to be the Propitiation for our sins.* Herein is love with an witness ; *God so loved the World, that he gave his only begotten Son,*

that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting Life. And that thou might'it be brought to believe in him, hath lookt after thee, call'd after thee, sent after thee into the Wilderness of Sin and Folly, in which thou wand'rest from him like a stray Sheep, and hath laid thee on his own Shoulders, to bring thee back unto his Fold, and the Shepherd of our Souls : Hath placed thee in his Church, under the influence of all his Ordinances, feeding thee with the Manna of his Word, and making Provision of the dew of Heaven to satisfie thy Thirst, opened a Fountain in Baptism to wash away thy filthines, and spread a Table before thee in despight of thy Spiritual Enemies, on which is the Life-giving flesh of his dearest Son ; calling thee, inviting thee, commanding thee, yea, intreating thee to buy Wine and Milk without Mony, and without Price; to take the Water of Life freely; to eat and drink abundantly, bearing with Patience thy Affronts, thy Sloath and Scorn have put upon him: Still waiting to be gracious, and promising after all thy Whoredoms, and Backslidings, to pardon them, and heal these, and to receive thee, and not so much as upbraid thee with them, or for them; but love thee freely, as if thou hadst never been defiled ; And own thee as his Spouse, and be thy Husband and take thee for a Child, and be thy tender-hearted Father, and give thee as his Heir, yea as joyn't heir with Christ, the Crown and Kingdom provided for, and promised to them that love him. And now can we forbear to ask David's question, Psal. 116.12. *What shall I render to the Lord for all his Benefits towards me ?* or take up other Resolutions than he did ; to take the Cup of Salvation, call upon the Name of the Lord, pay our Vows and walk before God in the land of the living. Love deserves returns of Love. Seing God therefore hath manifested so much Love in what he hath already done for us, and in what he hath farther promised to do for us. Let us manifest our Love to him by this real and acceptable expression of it, Universal and sincere Obedience. 2 Cor. 5.14. *The love of Christ constraineth us,* saith the Apostle ; to wit, to love him, and live to him, who loved us, and died for us. And let

let us not love in Word, neither in Tongue, but in Deed and in Truth, *1 Job. 3. 18.* Let us not say we love, or say we are thankful, but shew it and prove it. God and Christ have proved their Love to purpose, by Deeds; and if our Love be a return for theirs, it should have the like Stamp and Seal: a Love in Words, is not a fit return for a Love in Deeds. Now the proof of our Love, is Obedience to his Commandment. *If ye love me, keep my Commandments,* saith our Saviour; and *St. John, 1 John 2. 3. 4.* *Hereby we know that we know him, if we keep his Commandments: he that saith he knoweth him, and keepeth not his Commandment, is a Liar, and the truth is not in him.* This is the voice of both Law and Gospel, to them who love me and keep my Commandments.

God's Commandments are nothing else but the Declaration of his Will; and his Will is our Sanctification, saith St. Paul. The Sum of them is, that we abstain from the Sin they forbid, and practise the Good they require and injoin. That we refuse the Evil, and choose the Good; that we hate and leave Iniquity, and abstain from all appearance of Evil; and that we love and follow after Righteousness, endeavouring to be holy in all manner of Conversation, which is the Duty of the Text, to *cleanse our selves from all filthiness, and perfect holiness.*

2. I proceed to the second Reason, which respects God's Love of Complacency, his remunerating Love. We must *cleanse our selves, and perfect Holiness,* that God may love us with a Love of delight, and communicate himself to us, and reward us with him: God himself is the great Reward of his People; *I am thy exceeding great reward,* saith he to *Abraham, Gen. 17. 1.* and so he saith to all the Children of *Abraham:* but remember, *Walk before me, and be perfect.* But to take the Reason, as I gave it you before.

Christians must be thus Holy, because God hath planted in them Desires, and given them hopes of better things to be obtained. And this care of *Holiness,* is the condition upon which, and the means by which they are to be obtained. *Without Holiness none shall see the Lord;* as we have it Negatively from *St. Paul;* and *the pure in Heart*

*Heart shall see God*; as affirmatively from our Saviour himself. God moves Man by such Arguments, Motives, and Reasons, as are suited to move a nature so constituted as Man is. Now there being in Man's Nature an implanted Desire of Good and Happiness, the Divine Benignity and Wisdom takes advantage of that to draw us to our Duty, by propounding Happiness as our Reward. 'Tis true, Benefits do oblige to Duty, as in the former Reason: But 'tis as true, Duty must prepare, dispose, and qualify us for farther Benefits, which is the Scope of this Reason: Not only the Light of Nature taught the *Romans* to emblimise this in the Structure of their Temples of Honour and Virtue; that the only way to the first, was through the last. But St. Peter taught them ( if he ever taught them ) that *God hath called us to Glory and Virtue*, 2 Pet. 1. 4. To Glory as the End, and Virtue as the Means. And that we must add grace to grace, and grow in all grace, that an abundant entrance may be administred to us, into the eternal Kingdom. And I am sure St. Paul taught the *Romans* and us too, Rom. 2. that *by patient continuance in well-doing, we must seek for Immortality*, and so we shall obtain eternal Life. And 2 Thess. 2. 13. that we are chosen to Salvation, through Sanctification of the Spirit. And plain reason will convince us both of the Congruity that it should be thus, and the Necessity that it must be thus, if we consider either the Nature of God from whom we expect our Happiness, and the good things promised; or of the happiness and good things we expect from him. For God is Holiness it self, there is none holy as the Lord, *He is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity* with Approbation, Psal. 4. 4, 5, 6. *Thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness, neither shall evil dwell with thee* the foolish shall not stand in thy sight; thou hatest all workers of iniquity: He bids them depart from him here and hereafter. *Res est delicata Spiritus Dei*, he will not dwell in an impure Sty. All shadows of heavenly things exacted Cleanness in them who approach them; Moses and Joshua must put off their Shoes when they tread on that ground which God's appearance made Holy. God will

be sanctified in all that draw near to him, Levit. 10. 3. All was to be clean which appertain'd to God; his Temple, his Altar, and every Sacrifice to be offered on it, the Priests; *Be ye clean, that bear the Vessels of the Sanctuary.* The Worshippers must be cleansed, and 'twas present Death to approach in any uncleanness. Now Christians are to be his Temple, his Priests to offer spiritual Sacrifice; An holy Nation, God's Spouse. And if *Ester* must be 12 Months in purifying, *Estb. 2. 12.* to be brought into King *Abasuerus*, how should they be cleansed that are to be the Spouse of God, his Children, and therefore like him? *Be ye perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect,* or else he'll dis-inherit you, and cast you off. Or if we consider the Nature of our Happiness and Reward; 'tis an holy Happiness, to be received by an holy God, into his holy Heavens. Now no unclean thing can enter into the New *Jerusalem*, much less continue there. One Sin made a mutiny in Heaven. *Michael* and his Angel against the Devil and his, and no Peace there, till he was cast out. Paradise spewed out *Adam* for the first defilement, and Cherubims with a flaming Sword are Porters at its gates ever since. All this shews you the equitableness of the Reasons, 'tis fit it should be so. But if we could not demonstrate this at all, the Will of God is clear. And there were little hope to inherit the Promises against his Will, tho' there were no other bar to cut us off, and shut us out, *I Cor 6. 9. Know ye not that the unrighteous cannot inherit the Kingdom of God, neither Fornicators;* and such must be washed and cleansed. Godliness hath the Promise of the Life that now is, and of that which is to come.

Oh therefore, as you ever desire to be happy, or hope that God should receive you and delight in you, and communicate himself to you, *cleanse your selves from all filthiness, and perfect Holiness.*

I proceed to the second Motive drawn from Fear, our Fear that we have or ought to have of God.

Now this may be taken largely and less properly, or strictly and properly.

In the first Sense it implies the whole of Religion, and

and speaks an Opposition to those low and secular Motives, by which most Men are acted in their abstinence from Evil, and pursuit of Good. As if he had said, *Eschew Evil, and do Good*, not only for fear of Men, and to avoid danger from them, and the Punishments they can inflict for your faults and neglects: Nor for shame, and to secure your own Reputation and Credit, in vain-glory to procure a Name and Esteem of Godliness; nor for profit, as those who count gain Godliness, and forbear Sin to save Charges, but in Conscience to God, and with a sincere respect to him. What you are in Religion be upon grounds truly religious, doing it heartily as to the Lord, not to Men, as being devoted to his Fear, as *David* speaks of himself. And we find a gracious, religious, holy Disposition of Soul frequently described by this Phrase, *The fear of God*, as you may read *Jer. 32. 39. 40.* And to have no fear of God before their eyes, is all one as to have no Sense of Religion, *Rom. 3. 18.*

But, Secondly, the *Fear of God* may be taken in a stricter notion, for the proper affection of Fear, which is conversant about Evil, as its proper Object, and is placed in our Nature, to bridle and restrain us from what our Appetites might hurry us to.

Now this Fear is twofold, a nobler and more ingenious Fear, like that a Son towards his Father ; called therefore Filial, or Son-like Fear. Or lower and less ingenious, like that of a Servant towards his Lord, lest he provoke him to avenge himself upon him, call'd servile, or flavish Fear.

The first chiefly respects the Fault, the second the Punishment; both are good and lawful, tho' the first be far more excellent than the other : And both have their Use here, and afford us two Reasons of the Duty here required of us, and press'd upon us.

1. Christians should be thus careful to cleanse themselves from Sin and perfect Holiness, for fear least they grieve God.

2. Christians should be thus Holy, for fear they provoke God to grieve them; that is, to avenge himself

on them, in executing the Threatnings he hath denounced against Sinners, and those who neglect Holiness.

### A Word of each in order.

I. Christians should be thus careful for fear of grieving so good a God. Not only his Greatness, but his Goodness is to be feared, Psal. 130. 4. *There is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayst be feared:* Not only Wrath and Justice, and a disposition not to forgive; but Mercy, and a readiness to forgive, should make us fear to offend, Hos. 3. 4. *They shall fear the Lord, and his Goodness.*

Now our Uncleanness, and Filthiness, and neglect of Holiness, grieves God. Gen. 6. 6. *Man's wickedness grieved God at his very heart; yea, it breaks his very heart,* Ezek. 6. 9. *I am broken with their abominable heart, yea it vexes God,* Isa. 63. 10. *They rebelled and vexed his Holy Spirit;* 'tis a pressure and burden to him grievous and insupportable. Amos 2. 1. 3. *Bebold I am pressed under you, as a cart is pressed that is full of sheaves.* It wearies him and makes him serve, Isa. 43. 24. *Thou hast made me to serve with thy sins, and hast wearied me with thy iniquities.* It dishonours him, and cast contempt upon him, Rom. 2. 23. It causes his holy Name to be profaned, Ezek. 36. 20. It robs him of his Glory, it wounds him, and hath a tendency to dethrone him, to destroy him: not that the effect is possible, but the tendency of the act leans and leads that way.

Now how weighty, important and forceable should this Reason be, to constrain us to the Duty in the Text. What Son, who hath any Sense of Duty left, any Spark of Ingenuity remaining in him, would deal so with a tender-hearted and most indulgent Father, to grieve him, vex him, weary and load him, expose him to reproach and scorn, wound him and kill him? And Christians, if you have any awe, any fear, any respect, any veneration left for that Holy, that Good, that Great, that Blessed God, whom you call Father, and who hath offered to accept you into the number and honour of being his Sons and Daughters; do not grieve him, vex

vex him, by doing that abominable thing which he hates. But cleanse your selves from all filthiness, and labour to be Holy like your Holy Father, the Sons of God, without rebuke ; shewing your Legitimation by your Participation of the Divine Nature, and the Lineaments of the Divine Image on your Hearts, and the fruits of it in your Lives and Conversations.

2ly, Christians should be thus Holy for fear of God's displeasure, least he grieve them, and avenge himself upon them, and vindicate his Honour, which they have cast contempt upon, and sanctify his own Name, which they have profaned ; and plead against them the Quarrel of his Covenant which they have despised.

The same Apostle, who saith, the *Love of Christ constrains us* ; saith also, *knowing the terror of the Lord, we warn Men*. And the Scripture abounds with Arguments from Fear, as much as from any other Topic. God well knowing, that most are more prone to be awed by that, than allur'd by Love ; and therefore he hath hedged up our way with their Threatnings, and 'tis hard to kick against the pricks. He hath displayed his terrible Wrath, and dreadful Power and Justice. And upon the account warns us to *serve him with reverence and godly fear* ; because our God is a *consuming Fire*, Heb. 12. and last verse.

And we must pass the time of our sojourning here in fear, because we have to do with a Judge who judged without respect of persons, 1 Pet. 1. 17. And this as a means to make us holy as he is holy, v. 16.

Now this branches it self out into these two Heads.

Christians should be thus holy for fear of losing the Good prepared, offered and tendered to them ; for 'tis upon this condition expressly that 'tis promised. God in the faith, He will receive them, be their Father : But he also prescribes the terms and conditions on which he will make his promise good : *Be ye separate, and touch not the unclean thing.* And Heb. 4. 1. seems very parallel with my Text. Let us therefore fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. Rom. 11. 20, 21. *Thou stand-*

*left by Faith: be not high-minded, but fear, lest he also spare not thee.*

Either the presence of Sin, or the absence and want of Holiness will cut you off from God's favour, forfeit the Promises, I mean your right to them; shut you out of his Kingdom into which no unclean thing can enter: Therefore for fear of losing these things, *Cleanse your selves from all filthiness, and perfect Holiness.*

2. For fear of the Wrath denounced against these: *For the Wrath of God is revealed from Heaven against all Unrighteousness of Men, Rom. i. 18. Tribulation and Anguish, Indignation and Wrath upon every Soul of Man that doth Evil.* Fear him that can kill Body and Soul, and throw them into Hell: Christians should cleanse themselves from all filthiness, and be Holy for fear of Death, Eternal Death, Hell and Damnation.

Lastly, The last Motive or Reason to press the Duty of the Text, is drawn from the joint Consideration of Love and Fear: or from this Consideration, that God urges us with both these at once, and thereby signifies his great Desire that we should obey him in that, to which he preffeth us with all the Arguments our Nature is capable of, and can rationally be moved by; and so must obey, or be left for ever utterly inexcusable. Sometimes too much Indulgence spoils Children, and makes them wanton; and so they are ruin'd by the fondness of their Parents; and for want of awing them with necessary and just Severity, sometimes too much rigour provokes them, and discourages them, and makes them desperate. But a due temperament, and a necessary mixture of Love and Authority, Kindness and Severity, makes them know themselves, and leads them God in the way of Duty. Thus God, had he only wooed and allured us with Love, Mercy, Promises, and Rewards, we might have wax'd wanton, and said another day, We had not Wisdom enough to bear so much Indulgence. This Sail was too big for our shallow Vessel, and over-set us, and tempted us to Security and Presumption. But if God would have threatned us, scar'd us, put us in fear, we should then have known our selves,

selves, and obey'd him better. Or if God should be always chiding, threatening, flashing his Curse, Wrath, Fire and Brimstone, Death, Hell and Damnation in the face of our Conscience, this might sink and over-whelm us with despair, fill us with prejudice, and hard thoughts against him, and put an excuse into our mouths ; that if God would have used any fair means, given us any hope, we would have come unto him. Therefore God in his infinite Wisdom mingles and joins always together, that our Nature is capable of being moved by ; Hems us in on every side, that there is no way left to excuse our selves : But he may challenge us what could have been done more than I have not done, for my Vineyard, Isa. 5. 4. He shews us his Goodness and his Severity, his Love and his Wrath, his Mercy and his Justice : He uses fair means and foul : He sets before us Life and Death, Good and Evil ; Blessings and Curses, Heaven and Hell, Promises and Threatnings, to awaken our hopes and our fears. That if any thing will do, and prevail with us, nothing may be wanting. That if we may be drawn or driven, means conducing to each of them are afforded to us. So that Man can neither complain for want of Helps, nor excuse himself in his Negligence, having had all his Nature is capable of.

To conclude ; Why then will you ? how then dare you so boldly, so obstinately refuse, neglect and despise the things which concern your Peace ? Be wise, be wise before it be too late ; turn you at my reproof, turn you at God's reproof, and cast away your prophanie Neglects of God and Religion : Remember your selves to be Men, and live no longer like the Heathens, who know not God : But rouse up your selves, and bethink your selves of your past Neglects ; bewail them, judge your selves for them, and amend ; mind Religion seriously, and prize it highly, and love it sincerely ; learn it diligently, and preach it faithfully, that God may own and bless you now, and save you for ever.

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